

## Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-03 AGR-03 PM-03 NSC-07 SP-02

SS-14 RSC-01 L-02 H-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-04 PRS-01 COME-00 OMB-01 SWF-01 TRSE-00

DRC-01 /064 W

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R 071540Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0267

INFO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, PFOR, XY, SL, LI, GV

SUBJECT: MANO RIVER UNION: STEVENS' REMARKS AT  
FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

REF: MONROVIA 5742

1. AS INVITED REFTEL, FREETOWN HAS FOLLOWING REFLECTIONS ON SEVENS' REMARKS DURING FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF MANO RIVER UNION (MRU).

2. RE STEVENS' PERHAPS ODD MENTION OF GUINEA, WE INCLINED BELIEVE THIS STEMS FROM A SYNDROME OF UNDOUBTEDLY UNREALISTIC FEAR WHICH STEVENS AND VICE PRESIDENT/PRIMIN S.I. KOROMA CONTINUE TO HOLD ABOUT WHAT SEKOU TOURE MIGHT DO AT ANY PARTICULAR TIME. THEY HAVE EVEN AT TIMES FEARED, WE ARE SURE UNREALISTICALLY, THAT TOURE MIGHT ATTEMPT MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SIERRA LEONE, A CONTINGENCY WHICH MOST OBSERVERS HERE BLIEVE GOSL MILITARY FORCES, ALTHOUGH SMALL,  
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COULD CONTAIN ON GROUND IN UNLIKELY EVENT IT EVER

ATTEMPTED. ADDITIONAL FACTOR WHICH KEEP GUINEA ALWAYS FAIRLY CLOSE TO SURFACE OF GOSL THINKING IS SORT OF HANG-OVER FROM EARLIER ATTEMPTS OF STEVENS AND TOURE TO BUILD SOME TYPE OF CLOSER RELATIONSHIP, ALL OF WHICH HAVE COME TO NOUGHT. BELIEVE STEVENS' STATEMENT SHOULD BE SEEN AS ATTEMPT TO DEMONSTRATE TO TOURE, WHO CONSIDERED A RATHER MERCURIAL FIGURE, THAT MRU IS NOT AIMED AGAINST HIM. WITHIN CONTEXT OF FACT THAT MRU DECLARED TO BE OPEN TO MEMBERSHIP FOR OTHER NEIGHBORING STATES, IT IS NOT STRANGE THAT FROM GOSL VIEWPOINT FIRST THOUGHTS SHOULD BE ON GUINEA, ONLY OTHER STATE BESIDE LIBERIA WITH WHICH SIERRA LEONE HAS COMMON BORDER. WE CAN UNDERSTAND WHY THIS MIGHT NOT GO DOWN WELL IN LIBERIA ON THIS OCCASION BUT THESE WOULD BE THE ELEMENTS OF THE RATIONALE FOR STEVENS' COMMENTS ON GUINEA AS WE UNDERSTAND THEM.

3. STEVENS' MISGIVING ABOUT RAPID AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION PROBABLY REFLECT TWO FACTORS: FACT THAT SIERRA LEONE HAS GREATER LAND PRESSURE THAN LIBERIA WITH THREE TIMES THE POPULATION IN A SMALLER AREA AND FACT THAT GOSL HAS HAD RECENT UNFORTUNATE EXPERIENCE WITH LARGE AGRICULTURAL TRACTOR IMPORT PROGRAM. POOR MAINTENANCE AND OTHER PROBLEMS HAVE DEADLINED MANY TRACTORS, WHICH GOSL FINDS BOTH EMBARRASSING AND EXPENSIVE AND WHICH HAS BEEN A MAJOR CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN GOSL'S CURRENT RE-EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE, INCLUDING RECLAMATION OF SWAMP LAND INTO PADDY FIELDS WITH PROPER WATER CONTROL, AS MOST PROMISING MEANS QUICKLY INCREASING FOOD PRODUCTION AND REDUCING FOOD IMPORT BILL.

4. AS FOR "RE-UNIFICATION" PITCH, THIS STRIKES US AS MERELY PLATITUDINOUS AND PERHAPS IN SAME CLASS AS FONMIN LUKE'S PROPOSAL AT UNGA THAT UN BECOME A WORLD PARLIAMENT. SUCH EYE-CATCHING FLIGHTS OF FANCY PROBABLY MERELY REFLECT GOSL'S REALIZATION THAT THEY ARE FAIRLY SMALL FISH IN ANYBODY'S POND AND UNDER-

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TAKEN IN SOME HOPES OF BEING MORE WIDELY NOTICED.

5. AS CLOSING THOUGHT, IT SEEMS LIKELY TO US THAT STEVENS' COMMENTS WILL BE VIEWED DIFFERENTLY BY VARIOUS OBSERVERS DEPENDING ON INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES. ACTING UNDP RESPREP FREETOWN, WHO ATTENDED CELEBRATION, HAS TOLD US SHE WAS SURPRISED AND EXTREMELY IMPRESSED WITH BASIC REALISM OF STEVENS' OFF-THE-

CUFF COMMENTS. WHILE SHE DID NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTION IT, IT SEEMS LIKELY TO US THAT SHE MAY HAVE BEEN SPECIFICALLY REFERRING TO HIS MISGIVINGS ON AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION WHICH MIGHT APPEAR NOT HAVE SAME PROSPECTS OF USEFULNESS IN SIERRA LEONE AS IN LIBERIA WITH ITS MORE OPEN SPACES. IN ANY EVENT, DESPITE WHATEVER DIFFERENCES IN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AS MAY EXIST BETWEEN MRU PARTNERS, IT IS VERY EVIDENT IN FREETOWN THAT GOSL LAYS HEAVY STORE ON CLOSER TIES AND JOINT DEVELOPMENT WITH LIBERIA.  
OLSON

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INTERVENTION, INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS, SPEECHES, GROUND COMBAT OPERATIONS, INVASIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 07 OCT 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** elyme  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974FREETO01988  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740284-0076  
**From:** FREETOWN  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
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**Line Count:** 126  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** MONROVIA 5742  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** elyme  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 29 AUG 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <29 AUG 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <03 MAR 2003 by elyme>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** MANO RIVER UNION: STEVENS' REMARKS AT FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION  
**TAGS:** ETRD, PFOR, XY, SL, LI, GV, (STEVENS, SIAKA P)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005